MEDEMER

TRANSLATED BY J. BIRUK

ABIY AHMED ALI

NOBEL PEACE PRIZE LAUREATE

Medemer is more than a philosophy, it is a strategy, a mandate for progress. It reminds us that together, we are far stronger than we could ever be apart. Combine your vision with the vision of others. Harness your strength with the strength of your neighbors.

Translator's Note

The book Medemer was written by Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali and published in 2019. Half of the Medemer book, specifically Parts One and Two, was translated in 2022. For nearly four years, I have held on to the translated work for various reasons, and I have now decided that the moment has come to release it. Additionally, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali's parliamentary responses to questions raised by representatives of the people were translated in 2023. While a substantial portion of the book has been already translated, it still requires careful revision and final assessment before release. Once these final touches are completed, the remaining sections will be released soon.

I have also translated selected portions of the Prime Minister's parliamentary addresses, recognizing them as speeches of remarkable depth, infused with palpable patriotism and moral conviction that demand a wider audience. There are hundreds of speeches and addresses by the Prime Minister that carry deep lessons, lessons about leadership, resilience, shared responsibility, national dignity, and calls for unity, cooperation, and shared strength that transcend borders. Many of these speeches deserve translation so that their insights can be studied, debated, and applied by readers beyond Ethiopia's borders.

Medemer is more than a philosophy; it is a strategy, a mandate for progress. It reminds us that together, we are far stronger than we could ever be apart. Together, we will build the a future worthy of our potential. Medemer is a challenge to every one of us: stop working in isolation. Stop thinking small. Unite. Combine your vision with the vision of others. Harness your strength with the

strength of your neighbors. Because when we do, there is nothing, absolutely nothing, that can stand in our way.

The Prime Minister does not conceal his bold ambition for Ethiopia and its people. He speaks not only as a political leader but as a visionary who challenges and exposes, with blunt clarity, the world's selective moral judgments and frequent misunderstandings of Ethiopia that often emanate from Western observers. These critiques are not mere rhetoric; they are invitations to reconsider narratives, to listen, and to engage with Ethiopia from a place of fuller knowledge and mutual respect.

If you read this book and the last two speeches and find them impactful, share them widely. This is just a foretaste and a prelude of what's to come. This translation project is not driven by any financial motive. My intention was never to profit from the book. I have no claim to its commercial rights. The translated book will be made freely available in digital format. I hope the author recognizes that my efforts are not an act of theft or disrespect, but a sincere attempt to extend the reach of a meaningful idea. As he wrote in the book, knowledge is not personal property; It is something to be shared, for the benefit of all.

If any passages raise questions, or if the translation seems unclear in places, do not hesitate to contact me at therealjobiruk@gmail.com. Dialogue improves understanding; critique sharpens translation. In that spirit, I make these translations available—not as final pronouncements, but as invitations to read, to reflect, and to join a conversation about the future of Ethiopia and the responsibilities we owe one another as citizens of a connected world.

Acknowledgement

The mindset of Medemer had been mulling within me until the moment it came out of my mouth and I began sharing it with others. It has reached its current level through the same mindset and way of Medemer itself. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my friends, colleagues, and comrades who have supported me in embracing, reflecting upon, critiquing, and developing the idea so that the mindset of Medemer could develop, expand, and take shape to the extent that it can universally affect individual and social life. I am equally indebted to my friends who assisted me in reading, refining, and editing the manuscript of this book, whose thoughtful contributions have helped bring it to completion in its present form.

Preface

"Bashaashaa - oolmaa fi galiin bilaasha...”

"በሻሻ- ውሉ መግባትም በነጻ”

“In Beshasha, spending the day away and returning home is free.”

During my formative years, before I had reached the cognitive stage—a period I cannot recall precisely—the connection and harmony (compatibility) of the forces of nature, which are much greater than interdependence and congruence, were written on my childhood mind. My teacher of Medemer is nature. The chalk is my childhood village, Beshasha, and the blackboard is my childhood mind.

Nature has written many things on my childhood mind through Beshasha. Beshasha is an abstract. Her natural verdancy, the soil that sprouted its verdancy, the river that irrigated the soil, and the sky's compassionate rain, the sunrise that appears waiting for the dawn, the rustling wind that moves between the leaves—though I did not fully comprehend them at the time—she was inscribing a profound truth in me: that they are the combination of the colors of one nature, deployed together for a grand mission, not separate ones. Later, as I grew up and asked, read, and sought understanding, I realized that the combination of all those forces of nature is the union and harmonious diversity that perpetuates the life of the earth.

The concept of Medemer has grown alongside me since I first began thinking about life. When I was a child, it was as much a child as I

was. As I entered youth, it grew alongside me. When I entered the stage of adolescence and became an adult, and took on national responsibility at various levels, it has been maturing alongside me, proving itself worthy to become the guiding mindset I choose for the country I serve at a higher level: Medemer.

The concept of Medemer belongs to all of us. It has two types of tributaries: those that gave rise to it and those that nurtured its development. One is our values, upon which the heartbeat of our society is recorded—values which have endured and remained present throughout our history for centuries, birthed by our national cultures through great pain. The other is the law of nature. That is why I believe it holds the power to provide key solutions to our most pressing problems.

The concept of Medemer grew more mature and gradually took on a philosophical shape within me after I succeeded in integrating its mindset into leadership values and institutional culture building across the institutions where I served in various capacities. In particular, during the process of establishing the Information Network Security Agency (INSA) and in the years following its foundation (2006–2009), I endeavored to make Medemer a core institutional value and to foster our relationships with both local and international institutions in the same spirit to bring meaningful change.

During my tenure at the Science and Technology Information Center and at the Ministry of Science and Technology (now the Ministry of Innovation and Technology), I was able to establish Medemer as the core value of these institutions, embedding it as the central mindset of institutional culture and relationship-building. During my tenure in these institutions, I practically witnessed how the mindset of Medemer created institutional unity and hope within

the institutions, inspiring employees to work day and night with great motivation and to contribute their share with a deep sense of patriotism.

Starting from my early youth, the knowledge and skills I gained through both formal education and life's ups and downs taught me an outstanding lesson: there is no problem of life that the power and energy of Medemer cannot solve, no bridge of challenge that cannot be crossed, and no uphill of suffering that cannot be leveled. Beyond what I have seen and learned in life, it was not difficult to realize the significant role Medemer has played in the long history of our country's success. Indeed, every instance of triumph and success in our past history, whether directly or indirectly, is a result that can be traced back to Medemer.

At a time when a few European countries were being led by the policy of colonial expansion, they were pillaging all the land they reached like hot commodities and bringing countries under their grip in a short period of time, we accelerated the entombment of the Italian invading force by coming together. There is no better testimony to the power and energy of Medemer than the mountains of Adwa.

During my years as a young soldier in the national defense army, I had the opportunity to visit nearly every region of our country and live closely among its people. I observed diverse customs, traditions, values, cultures, and ways of life. I was able to realize the peak of Ethiopian identity in a few incidents I encountered in the midst of battle, on the battlefield where the true identity of human beings is tested. Ethiopians are united not only through tolerance, love, and neighborliness, but also their identity is interlocked through a deep sense of brotherhood not to be separated, merged, and united together, not to break away.

In stark contrast to our noble habit of Medemer, we have made our country a symbol of poverty and backwardness on the world stage due to our practice of hatred, revenge, and impeding one another. We have turned its land into a land of war and blood and its people into a model of refugees. By failing to cooperate, support one another, and show love for each other, we have disgraced our identity and driven our country onto a path of misery and a cycle of chaos that seems to have no way out. We must halt this highly perilous course—one that has brought our country to the brink of a cliff—before it plunges us into an abyss of suffering from which recovery may be impossible. And the right time to do this is now.

That is why Medemer is the concept that perfectly fits our time. Beyond its literal meaning, it is a comprehensive framework in which I have compiled the solution options I believe would be useful in tackling the political, economic, and social problems Ethiopia is facing, with the ultimate goal of bringing progressive change.

As I mentioned above, the sources of the concept of Medemer are the nature and values of our people. Its enhancements include the studies and research works, the articles I have prepared for organizational leadership discussions at different times, the documents I have presented, thinking they would be useful for the government's understanding and decision-making regarding the challenges faced in each period, and the training articles I have prepared for various government workers and officials at different times, as well as for teachers and administrative members of higher education institutions.

As a leader who seeks to chart a plan for both the current situation of our country and its future destination, when I present the concept of Medemer as a key to addressing our national challenges,

I believe that the Medemer mindset holds a significant place in the culture and lifestyle of our people and reflects the very nature of human beings, far beyond its connection to my professional experience and personal life. I have no doubt that this concept will serve as a cornerstone for resolving our longstanding problems, as it is deeply rooted in the social and psychological fabric of our country.

As I set out to write this idea, I do not presume to claim, “I will cover everything in a single volume within limited pages.” Rather, I wish to convey that this book should be understood as a beginning, not an end; a starting point, not a conclusion.

Happy reading!

Introduction

During the last years of the monarchy system (after King Teferi's rise to power), the position that Ethiopia followed as a country was highly influenced by the Westerners' mentality. It was a period marked by a conscious effort to emulate the Westerners in all matters: we adopted the Westerners' methods to solve our problems and allowed our educational policies, as well as our other economic and political ideologies, to lean toward the Westerners.

Post-revolution, this approach shifted. We turned our gaze from America and England to the Soviet Union and China, from the countries of Western Europe and North America to those of Eastern Europe and the Far East Asia countries. From that time until now, we may occasionally glance toward the West, yet our heart and mind have remained firmly anchored in the Eastern world. In fact, nothing better than in the previous period has occurred, because we didn't look inward as much as we looked outward, and because we didn't seek indigenous solutions to our country's problems, our problems have only changed in form and appearance; they have not been eliminated.

An ideology or any other idea is effective only if it is drawn from the behavior, culture, lifestyle, and thinking of society and is forged without abandoning the social and psychological foundation of the country. This is not to say that there are no valuable lessons to be learned from either the West or the East; rather, it is to stress that we must not forsake our own social and psychological foundation in search of solutions to the internal challenges we face, like a drunkard who drops his house key in darkness but searches for it where the light is, not where it was lost.

We must understand that the solutions to the problems our nation has carried for centuries cannot be found in borrowed mindsets we gleaned, imported, and copied from overseas without proper examination. Rather, they emerge from the good values that have been accumulating in our country and have taken root within our own soil across generations. Of course, it is not an unusual act for us to embrace knowledge and experiences from abroad, as long as we integrate them with the depth of our own traditions and customs and wear them by weaving them according to our size. Our path should not be to discard what is ours and cling solely to what is not ours, but rather to connect and integrate what neighbors have with what is inherently ours.

In political, social, and economic matters, we may adopt methods and mindsets obtained from abroad, but they must be reshaped to fit the unique realities of our country and take on a national form. Nevertheless, it must never be forgotten that we must begin traveling with the principle of "indigenous solutions to indigenous problems."

In this sense, Medemer is the concept that aims to indicate the answer to the question of how we can resolve our problems based on the national context. This book contains sixteen chapters divided into four sections, to provide this answer in each category.

The first part presents the starting-point issues and the fundamental ideas of medemer. It explores basic human needs and capacities to understand medemer from its roots. Next, it examines the strengths and weaknesses of political economy concepts that have proposed solutions to meet human needs, and evaluates their hold and effectiveness in our country. Finally, it explains the fundamental concept of medemer. It outlines the conceptual framework through which medemer aims to bridge the gap

between human nature and the ideological responses previously presented. This section also explores the obstacles that may hinder the implementation of medemer.

The second part of the book presents the political dimension of the concept of Medemer. The grand national challenge that the Medemer page intends to address is how it is possible to actualize a strong, democratic Ethiopia by overcoming the existential challenge posed by planting and sustaining democracy in an underdeveloped nation-state. In this section, the current challenges we face in building a strong and democratic state, as well as the measures we should take in the future to overcome them, will be explored within the framework of Medemer

The third section presents the economic dimension of the concept of medemer. This section examines current economic problems in detail and explains the structural causes underlying the economic fracture. It also explores Ethiopia's immense potential for development and suggests the measures needed to free the economy from its challenges and bring about progressive change.

The fourth and final section presents the concept of medemer in the sphere of foreign relations. It explores international, continental, and regional trends and examines the implications they have for our country. Following this, it explains the philosophy that our country should follow in foreign relations and diplomacy, as well as the key issues Ethiopia should pay attention to in the future.

The book is written for a political purpose rather than an academic one, and therefore it does not follow a strictly academic approach. In the book, works by various authors, including books and articles, have been used as input to reflect upon and contemplate the concept of medemer. In general, the main textual inputs and

noteworthy articles are presented at the end under Reference Books.

In this book, an effort has been made to use words in ways that reflect national meanings as much as possible. In this process, care has been taken to ensure that the meanings of the words are not misunderstood or misconstrued, and clarifications are provided wherever words are mentioned that may invite ambiguity. Words that are not explicitly defined, or are mentioned only briefly in the writing, are also included in the glossary.

Part One

The Foundational Ideas of the Concept of Medemer

Chapter One

The Integrative Needs and Capacities of Human Nature

Before contemplating any ideas intended to benefit human beings, it is essential to first reflect on human nature. On one hand, knowing human nature, what a person needs (needs) and wants (desires) to fulfill those needs, and on the other hand, understanding their capacities enables the formulation of a plan for fully utilizing those capacities. Therefore, in order to express the concept of medemer, we examine the nature of human beings from the perspective of their needs and capacities as a starting point.

1.1 Human Needs

Human needs are mostly universal in nature, yet their desires differ according to the conditions of one's life. Many African children, who lack even a morsel to taste or lick and wait for a mere drop of food from another's hand, do so because their need to eat is unmet. Being the children of impoverished Africans does not silence the growl of their empty stomachs. Hunger is not a matter that can be dismissed by saying, "I cannot afford a meal, so I should simply sit quietly." To be deprived of food is not the same as being denied a doll one longs for on the bustling streets. Needs are the internal feelings of deficiency we have as human beings, urging us to seek fulfillment. We may or may not be clearly conscious of these deficiencies, but we will inevitably wander to meet the needs. Humans guide all their needs by the collective (bundled) need to ensure survival. We can divide the need to ensure survival into two basic parts: "direct need" and "indirect need."

A "direct survival need" is the need to protect oneself from an immediate and clearly imminent existential threat. This means human beings' need to protect themselves and survive against killing, war, or any other form of attack that directly endangers their existence. This need exists at both the individual and societal levels. At the individual level, people have a need to defend and preserve themselves from attack. Similarly, at the societal level, citizens collectively have a need to safeguard their existence by defending themselves and their nation against foreign attack and invasion. When we say that citizens defend themselves and their country from foreign attack, we mean that their individual instinct for self-preservation also manifests in national situations. We do not mean citizens who sacrifice their lives purely out of love for their country, as such sacrifice is more related to group identity and honor than to a direct need for survival.

Countries establish police forces, defense institutions, security agencies, and similar structures to fulfill the direct survival needs of their citizens, both at the individual and societal levels—that is, to shield them from existential threats such as war, murder, and other forms of violence that imperil their lives.

Through these institutions, citizens are safeguarded from both domestic and foreign threats without needing to arm themselves. The government fulfills its responsibility to ensure their survival need by defending them against attack.

On the other hand, the survival needs of human beings extend beyond protection from immediate and obvious existential threats; they also include protection from "indirect existential threats." This indirect survival need can be divided into three categories: physical needs, the need for honor (name), and the need for freedom.

"Physical needs" are those basic needs that humans share with the animal kingdom, such as eating, drinking, excreting, finding shelter, and protection from disease, etc. Countries respond to these needs through their social and economic protection institutions designed to safeguard human well-being. Programs in agriculture and food security, healthcare, education, water supply, and other related services are established to ensure that the physical needs of citizens are adequately met.

The unfulfillment of these needs exposes human beings to immense suffering, misery, and even death. When physical needs remain unmet, the social and economic security of people falls into jeopardy, creating conditions in which people may perish from hunger, disease, or various natural and man-made calamities. In this way, the neglect of physical needs also indirectly threatens human existence.

By the “need for honor (name),” we mean the need human beings show to have their name recognized for virtuous or commendable deeds. It is the need to seek honor, self-worth, and to affirm one’s own value. This need is highly complex and closely intertwined with other human needs, making it often difficult to clearly identify and address on its own.

The need for honor reflects the human need to be valued by oneself and by others, and to be accorded respect. While the self-worth humans give to themselves depends on the estimation and respect shown to them by others, the way they interpret this estimation of others is equally important. This is observed both at the individual and community level.

Although the value an individual assigns to himself emanates from the attitude his friends and neighbors have towards him, it is not merely their regard that matters; his own interpretation of these attitudes of others also shapes the self-esteem he gives to himself. At the community level, the same principle applies. The collective self-esteem a community attributes to itself depends on the estimation it receives from other communities, and the way the community interprets that. The question of a name is a question of equality. The demand for equality is an effort not to be regarded as inferior, or as less valuable in comparison to others; rather, it is an effort to be acknowledged as equal, or even as worthy of greater esteem.

Questions of identity are part of this need for a name. The question of identity reflects the need to elevate one’s own name. Although the need for a name includes a demand for equality, the need may not be satisfied by guaranteeing equality alone. The human need for honor goes beyond equality, driven by a continual desire to magnify one’s name. People have a deep-seated need to be recognized as

famous and remembered, and they have a strong tendency for their names to be spoken of and honored in social and historical order long after their passing.

The other and third need is the "need for freedom." From the dawn of history to the present day, human beings have been paying heavy sacrifices to break the chains of bondage and liberate themselves from the confinement imposed by others.

Freedom is the ability to make our own choices, unbound by the will of others, amidst the options that we come across in life. The need for freedom is a trait of human beings that is deeply intertwined with their existence. People shout slogans and raise their voices navigating through the shadow of death because they are compelled by their need for freedom.

From the Medemer perspective, it can be understood that human beings' needs are integrative and synergistic in nature. On one hand, the needs are complementary and interrelated; on the other hand, they may at times stand in contradiction with one another. Consequently, people can only achieve these needs by coming together, not in isolation.

When we say the needs are interrelated, we mean that they are primarily connected and often resemble one another. For instance, the direct survival need refers to being protected from direct attack imposed by others. This could alternatively be described as freedom when viewed from a different angle.

As our need for freedom gradually begins to be thwarted or falters, the ultimate consequence is a direct existential threat. When we say that we have lost our freedom because we are imprisoned, we mean that another person is exercising command over our body and autonomy. In this sense, we can say that the direct survival need is

part of the need for freedom. However, release from physical confinement alone does not guarantee equality; it guarantees freedom. Equality extends beyond being released from the exploitation of our captors; it also includes confronting the power that sought to subjugate us and competing by standing alongside our captors on equal footing.

On the other hand, there is a contradiction among the needs. Fulfilling one need may undermine another. To satisfy the direct survival need, we may compromise freedom. Conversely, in fulfilling freedom, we risk undermining equality. For instance, to safeguard citizens from attack, we exercise strict control over them, and this imposes restrictions on their liberty. If we refrain from taking action to protect their liberty, lawbreakers who violate the law and societal order may assault them, thereby endangering their very existence.

In contrast, when we pledge to protect the equality of citizens, we are bound to place restrictions on people's need to live and work freely. In order to make citizens equal, it begins by controlling behemoths and curbing their greed. This involves setting limits on people's work and wealth. Restrictions will be imposed to prevent them from gaining political dominance. Yet these measures also undermine people's freedom. If we proclaim absolute respect for their liberty and simply tell people they are free to do as they wish, the strong will establish hegemony in wealth, political influence, and cultural dominance by crushing the weak, which in turn undermines the very equality we seek to protect.

On the one hand, when we examine both the internal connection and unity of human needs, and on the other hand, the contradictions that exist among them, we can realize that these needs can only be fulfilled when both the people and the needs are

integrated and united by coming together. No need can be fulfilled in isolation, and no individual can thrive alone. If the liberty of one has an impact on the equality of another, and if protecting one from assault erodes the freedom of another, then the fate of each of us is bound to the fate of the other, and the ultimate solution to fulfilling our needs lies in coming together in unity—Medemer. Likewise, since our needs themselves are integrative and complementary in nature, one without the other alone cannot ensure our survival or secure our well-being.

For that reason, it is when we look at all needs by adding them together that they ensure our existence. We cannot advance by elevating one need above the others, nor by remembering one while neglecting another.

For centuries, the “direct survival need” has been her foremost need, and the long history of our country has centered on defending itself from the perils of war and preserving its very existence. During the rare periods of peace, the country sought to leave behind traces of civilization that we are proud of today and cherish. In spite of that, our relentless focus on rallying to protect the country from danger has kept us distant from civilization in many ways. At the dawn of our country's modern history, the inspiration we displayed for civilization was largely directed toward fulfilling this direct survival need and the modernization of military forces. However, the same level of inspiration and dedication was not shown toward fulfilling our other essential needs.

But the main question we must consider is: “Does self-defense against attack alone protect the survival of a people?” The number of people who have perished in our country due to disease and hunger, apart from guns, is far from negligible. National historical records tell us that the dangers of famines and pestilences have

claimed many lives and repeatedly afflicted our people over the course of history. Thus, an existential threat does not come solely from the bullet's tip. An existential threat also arises when there is no food on the table. This is a truth we have come to understand only belatedly. Yet, even when we understand our physical needs and strive to fulfill them, we are still confronted with a persistent problem: we think that physical needs take precedence over the need for freedom and name. Thinking that “a people who do not eat properly will not have other needs,” or believing that “a people who cannot feed themselves cannot aspire to freedom, honor, or equality,” or the notion that says “the stomach takes precedence over all,” is a mindset born of the sorrow and trepidation that hunger has long instilled in us.

The saying, “If a person fulfills his physical needs, the rest will follow slowly,” stems from viewing humans merely as animals. But humans are not defined only by their physical needs. They are also zealous and ready to lay down their lives for their honor and freedom. Our country’s proverb, “Better to forgo bread than to tarnish one’s name,” is not spoken without reason.

The Translator's Note

[The proverb’s message is: it is better to go hungry (to sacrifice physical comfort or survival) than to lose your good name or moral integrity.]

Human beings' need for freedom and a name is a strong need that can drive them even to surrender their own lives to death. If our need for a name is not met and our self-esteem diminishes, we will have no need for life, let alone for food. Many people take their own lives or die fighting others to fulfill this need for dignity and a good name.

According to the philosophy of Medemer, all needs are prioritized according to their circumstances; adopting a constant procedure or assigning the needs a fixed hierarchy is a narrow viewpoint. Ignoring one need while attending to another will not resolve our existential problem. To prevent external attacks inflicted on the country and to combat domestic violence in advance, it is necessary to build a strong society by fulfilling its indirect survival needs. It is far more effective to meet the needs that can lead to violence and threaten our existence in advance, rather than merely rallying to stop or eliminate violence and war after they have already occurred or are underway.

Human beings' needs are all vital needs that should be recognized and treated equally according to their existing circumstances. We need to meet the needs that people have as human beings. Since humans are creatures who possess needs different from those of animals, we view human needs from the standpoint of their complex nature.

For example, what does megderder indicate in our culture? When we go to someone's house and are asked to eat, why do we hesitate even if we are hungry? That is because megderder is the result of the conflict between physical needs and the need for honor. If physical needs were always placed before the need for honor, we would not starve or go out without eating simply out of megderder. Therefore, megderder is a social habit that illustrates that the level

of importance that physical needs and the need for honor (name) have in human life is not arranged procedurally in the same order, and that human beings want and value both needs highly.

The Translator's Note

Megderder's Direct Meaning from Amharic

[Megderder refers to wanting something or wishing to have it, yet pretending otherwise—acting as though one does not desire it, hiding one's true needs, or attempting to do more than one is capable of, pretending to already possess what one lacks (such as wealth or property). It describes a person who, in their heart, truly longs for something, but in words denies wanting it or claims they will not pursue it.

Megderder's short message here expresses that if survival needs (food) were prioritized over pride or honor, people wouldn't risk starving for the sake of maintaining dignity.]

In the way that Ethiopia traveled to maintain its existence, without properly answering the questions of honor and freedom, Ethiopia repeatedly and miraculously escaped destruction countless times from the flames of long-suppressed needs that had been burning inside like smoldering embers beneath the ash, threatening at any moment to erupt and consume her.

It is this way of stifling needs, which occurs repeatedly and emerges unexpectedly when thought to be lost, that kept the country trapped in a never-ending cycle of existential threat. We must understand that if a proper channel meant to accommodate any need is not established, and instead is suppressed, it will ambush and consume the country like an ember smoldering within.

Because human needs are fundamentally survival needs, failing to respond to them amounts to a reckless gamble with survival itself.

1.2 Human Capacity

On the one hand, some say that the ups and downs that human beings experience in life are "guided by the existing laws of action and reaction (cause and effect) from a physics perspective." On the other hand, others claim that human beings are "free creatures who determine their own destiny through their free will, not slaves of their environment governed by mechanical laws." Thus, there is an age-old debate around human capacity. Those who argue that humans "do not have free will" are either those who view humans from a biological standpoint or those who believe that people are heavily influenced by their environment.

The biologists' perspective, which asserts that "the destiny of human beings is determined by their biological capacity," holds the view that "what people are born with naturally leads them (shapes their path)." This viewpoint teaches that people "can never alter what nature has ordained them to be, nor what they have been conditioned to become; they must live in accordance with it and be guided by it." This perspective has held a significant place in the long history of human beings and has laid the foundation for viewpoints that we now regard as outdated.

This viewpoint has often been used as a powerful tool to undermine the struggles of various groups for equality by assigning biological meaning to their differences. For instance, the main origin of the spirit of white extremist–supremacist ideology, which has historically worked to undermine and suppress the struggle of Black people for their rights, was the belief that white people are

naturally superior to Black people. Still today, there are scholars who continue to propagate this narrative of biological difference even in academic writings, despite its having been discredited as unscientific. Likewise, one of the greatest obstacles to the struggle for women's rights is the entrenched notion that asserts that women are inferior to men by their nature, which attributes the universal differences observed between men and women to the dictates of nature, thereby transforming inequality into a destiny rather than a deterrent to be overcome.

This viewpoint, which hands over human destiny to nature and prevents people from changing their destiny through their own efforts, is increasingly being overcome nowadays. The other side of this perspective insists that the identity and destiny of human beings are "created by the process of action and reaction (cause and effect) they engage in with their environment, not by human beings' own conscious thoughts and needs." This idea carries within it the presumption that "human beings are slaves of their environment." In other words, it gives credence to the claim that a person's character is determined by the influence of their surroundings rather than by their own choices, and reduces human character to nothing more than the imprint of external conditions.

On the contrary, in recent times, the viewpoint that asserts that "human beings are self-determining creatures and architects of their own destiny" has grown ever stronger. This perspective holds that most of the social realities in which humanity exists are largely of human creation; yet, with the passage of time, circumstances have arisen in which people often come to regard their own creations as if they were external laws. While science acknowledges the existence of natural differences between individuals, it affirms that the disparities among social groups and the backwardness of people arise from social and political fabric (structures) rather than

from nature itself. This is the perspective that asserts that human beings possess the ability to shape and transform their own lives. In recent years, an increasing number of ideas are emerging that state even the intellectual competence of individuals is grounded in the needs and efforts of individuals. This reinforces the notion that the destiny of human beings is fundamentally determined by, and rests upon, their free will.

According to the philosophy of Medemer, human free will continually grows over time, and in this process of growing, their knowledge and psychological capacities also develop. The journey of human beings is a process of strengthening their free will and progressively liberating themselves from enslavement to their environment and nature. Consequently, human free will is based on past actions. In other words, the efforts and deeds of yesterday serve as the initial and foundational capital for future endeavors, upon which the achievements of tomorrow are built.

Humans possess free will, but it is not an absolute will. The more they master nature, the more their free will strengthens and expands. Paradoxically, in the present age, while this evolving free will advances to overcome nature, humans find themselves subdued by their own handiwork, which dictates the course of their free will. For instance, the influence that technology is exerting on human life as a whole poses a greater challenge to humans′ free will than nature does or ever could.

When we say that human beings possess free will, we are not implying that their behavior is entirely independent and uninfluenced by their interaction with their environment. Both natural and human-made elements that surround human beings leave their imprint on human conduct. From this perspective, that is to say, the structures that humans themselves create and

establish shape their character and life. However, humans do not learn from their surroundings through a pure action-and-reaction mechanism, as the laws of physics might suggest; they learn by using their active minds. Hence, this implies that humans have a natural ability and competence to select, interpret, and also improve what they learn from their surroundings. To put it another way, human beings are therefore not inanimate objects to be steered and manipulated at will by political structures; they possess active minds that can interpret, adapt, and even reshape political structures themselves. This highlights a limitation of liberalism: by focusing exclusively on building institutions, it fails to move forward beyond appearances.

Although humanity has achieved remarkable advances in many areas and is now at the pinnacle of civilization it has attained, the reality remains that the fundamental needs of human beings are still far from being properly met. People continue to perish from hunger. They still endure agony from the lack of access to medicine and proper treatment. Despite progress, they persist in killing one another, and their lives remain ensnared in forms of indirect hunting.

Why is human beings' civilization so multicolored and asymmetrical? While some people's needs are fulfilled, why are others' needs left unmet and deprived? In the midst of all these civilizational triumphs, how have suffering, sorrow, regret, death, vexation, tears, wails of despair, and cries of anguish become such daily commonplace realities of our world to this extent? Although many scholars have offered countless reasons related to differences in civilization or levels of development among human beings—ranging from gifts of nature, leadership competence, the character of government, culture, institutional capacity, international relations, and the legacy of colonialism—at its core, this question of civilizational disparity raises a deeper debate regarding the very nature of human beings.

On the one hand, there is the point of view that portrays human beings as greedy, selfish, competitive, and violent creatures; on the other hand, there is the perspective that sees them as fundamentally good, cooperative, and considerate creatures. These opposing views have created an agenda for debate regarding human nature.

In the aftermath of the First World War, biologists and evolutionists advanced the notion that "human beings are cruel and dangerous creatures," a perspective shaped by the unprecedented terror and impact the war had impressed upon them. They argued that the reason humans achieved civilization before other species was made possible by their ability to dominate and control their environment through extreme cruelty. This outlook, which emerged in the wake of the First World War, gained further prominence and attention with the outbreak of the Second World War. Conversely, the global rise of Communism shifted scholarly focus toward the cooperative and good aspects of human nature.

Instead of competition, cooperation began to be considered a part of human nature. In contrast, scholars who criticized Communism argued that "Communism overlooks the selfishness and competitive nature of human beings." Eventually, as the liberal point of view gained wider acceptance, the perspective that depicts humans as greedy, selfish, and competitive creatures became dominant. The major problem observed in this process of judging human nature is that the judgment is drawn from ideology. It should have been the other way around. We would be more accurate if we formed our ideology after weighing the view we hold about human nature with a free mind.

As a result of hitching the horse behind the cart and letting the cart lead the horse, the conclusions we draw about human nature have turned into a frantic scurry and scramble, serving mainly to dress up our ideology and make it more appealing and persuasive.

Human nature is open to both good and evil, competition and cooperation, selfishness and concern for others, aggression and peacefulness. It is open-ended, with the chance to grow in any direction; it is not something confined to one extreme. Humans possess an advanced mind. This advanced mind can be wielded for either good or evil. When used for good, one may rise to exemplify the moral excellence of good people who stand in history remembered for their virtue in our world; when turned toward malice, one may fall to the likeness of those recalled for their wickedness and malevolence. Its direction determines one’s legacy.

According to the Medemer view, the tendency of human beings to be competitive or cooperative, aggressive or peaceful, is in their own hands. They have the capacity to construct and strengthen the character they aspire to embody. The civilization of humankind, having gone through many ups and downs to reach maturity, must

recognize this capacity of human beings in order to become a fully mature and genuine civilization by fulfilling the needs of every individual.

For now, Medemer ends here. What follows are the speeches the Prime Minister delivered in Parliament at two different times. The translated remainder of the Medemer book, specifically Part One and Part Two up to Chapter Eleven, will be released soon. The remaining sections are more intriguing and suspenseful; to be sure of that, we will discover them together.

The Price of War and the Promise of Peace

Many questions have been raised regarding peace and stability. As the Honorable Parliament understands, the rule of law, on the one hand, and human rights, on the other, are two competing principles that demand careful balance. If we fail to maintain a proper balance between them, leaning too far toward either side will inevitably lead to destruction.

In another sense, how do we reconcile and balance national unity, collective identity, and coexistence with the emphasis placed on amplifying collective identity? When one is amplified (reinforced) at the expense of the other, divergent narratives proliferate, diminishing our shared interests and weakening our common national narratives. and divergent narratives threaten national unity. Therefore, it is essential to strike a balance, because only through a shared narrative can we truly strengthen Ethiopia.

If there is a group, government, or country that fervently wants peace more than war, that thinks about forgiveness rather than succumbing to revenge, that looks to the horizon of the future instead of dwelling on the sorrows of yesterday's transgressions, a group that wants reconciliation instead of conflict, then it means they have embarked on a path towards success.

I have said this before, and I repeat it again today: it is not those who repeatedly propagate the notions of war who will fearlessly march into the battlefield or fight on the front lines when war breaks out. Let it be known to the entire people of Ethiopia that a person who incessantly chatters and clamors for war from a distance is unlikely to be found at the forefront of battle. From whatever place or edge, that person's sinister agenda is to lead our impoverished nation's sons and daughters into slaughter. It is unfair to blindly follow a person who attempts to incite people without cause.

The speech was taken from the July 6, 2023 parliament session. Source: Ethiopia Insider

Peace requires a positive attitude. Peace does not come without cost but rather demands profound investment and hard work. A person who does not sow the seeds of trust, respect, and forgiveness cannot reap the bountiful harvest of peace. Merely speaking of peace while sowing doubt, hurling insults, and displaying disdain will never stand together.

Peace requires mutual respect, support, and an earnest willingness to relinquish for one another's sake. Only if everyone collectively does this can we hope to behold absolute serenity. The pursuit of peace must be the foundation of all our success, above all else.

War is not lightly waged by one day's passing disappointment. Likewise, it is not an issue to be brushed aside so easily, nor is its haunting memory easily forgotten. Don't start the war; once you start, it's hard to stop, and even if you manage to stop, it's hard to forget. The battlefield is adorned with countless wounds, scars, and devastation.

In my belief, as a country, we have fought enough wars in the last hundred years. Even after reforms, we have still engaged in more than enough wars. More than enough. conflict is not beneficial, whoever starts it; it is a trial that can only beget ruin and devastation.

But Ethiopia needs a rejuvenating breath of fresh air after all these ceaseless wars. It is the time for deep introspection and assessment to delve into the roots of this war that has ravaged our homeland. How did this war start? Who ignited this war? Who orchestrated the discord that pitted our people against each other and drove brother to slay brother? And who now callously revels in the sadistic amusement derived from our suffering?

Indeed, these questions demand profound evaluation. An assessment is needed to determine the magnitude of our gains and losses. New wars are thought of when we pass without reviewing the situation we have gone through, but it needs reviewing. Reconstruction is required after the evaluation. Extensive work is needed on infrastructure. A change of narrative is required. Clinging to the blame solely on the TPLF or the Prosperity Party shall not unlock the gateway to peace.

If we truly yearn for peace, our discourse must transcend animosity; we must moderate our discourse. There are two problems regarding the TPLF. On one hand, we emphasize that the people of Tigray are an integral part of Ethiopia and that Ethiopia must maintain its unity; secession is not allowed, and we do not want secession. This is a good idea. If we reject secession and consider the people of Tigray as part of Ethiopia, we should also recognize that they have the same rights as any other Ethiopian. They cannot live and be treated as secondary citizens.

When we ask the people of Tigray to live with us, we must respect their rights. Those of us who advocate for unity should be the first to speak out about this. I envision an Ethiopia where every Ethiopian enjoys equal rights. When we fail to do this, and instead push them away from one side while asking them to live with us on the other side, it does not hold together. All the actions we take should demonstrate the goodness of staying together. This should be the responsibility of all of us.

Just as we worked wholeheartedly when war was overwhelming and we decided to go to war, we now work wholeheartedly as peace comes. We don't engage in inconsequential theatrics in the middle. We work wholeheartedly for peace. If peace goes beyond our control and capacity, we will do the same to defend ourselves.

Amharas displaced from Oromia, Tigrayans displaced from Amhara, and other Ethiopians displaced from their respective regions must be returned to their homes. There must not be any part of Ethiopian territory that cannot carry or shelter Ethiopians. This is unjust and unacceptable.

There are two main problems. The first is that there are those who exploit the suffering of the displaced—those who choke and hold

them, trade in their misery, and prevent them from returning to their homes for personal or political gain.

The second problem is that when people are displaced, others come to believe that their own territory has somehow expanded. But displacing someone from their home does not expand anyone's land. A brother cannot create more space by expelling and driving out his brother. Ethiopia does not have a shortage of land; we have more than enough space that can embrace all Ethiopians.

There may be a problem of infrastructure, but there is no shortage of space in any region of Ethiopia. Ensuring that all displaced citizens are returned to their homes must be our collective homework—a duty incumbent upon all of us.

As Ethiopians wisely say, advice is like a guest: if invited, it will stay and share the night; if ignored, it will depart. It is better to consult with one another on issues and to approach them calmly and thoughtfully.

What I want you to consider here is that post-war jobs are not easy, but rather hard. As you all know, in the 19th century, the northern and southern states of America fought a civil war. After the end of the war, it took more than 12 years of reconstruction. [Translator's note: racial tensions, regional resentment, and political divisions continued for many decades afterward, and even then, generations passed before genuine national unity and trust could be restored.] There is no guarantee of immediate reconciliation and trust the day after war is over; it takes a lot of work to achieve these.

If we take Spain, after the 1936–1939 war, it took them nearly four decades to agree and come together again as citizens of one country. Grudges are often passed down through generations and are not easily forgotten. In Africa, many countries like Nigeria,

Angola, and Ethiopia reflect similar situations. There is no such thing as “we fought, we reconciled, and now it is over.” The scars of conflict linger, and the grudges will live on. It's important for everyone to consider this aspect.

Here is the link to the full speech on YouTube:

https://youtu.be/cpqDldsll6U?si=uYPsWP1VjXB6zUXZ

No One Wins in the Graveyard: The Folly of Fratricidal Wars

Now, those who have people to speak for them, those who have an environment that amplifies their voices, will be heard. But who will speak for the people of Tigray? The children of Tigrayan mothers have been raped, displaced, and hundreds of thousands of Tigray's children have been left to suffer from unknown diseases, victims of a conflict caused by the junta (TPLF). Countless have been raped and robbed.

When you go to the Tigray region, people there say that no one else in Ethiopia has been pushed aside, wronged, and abused as they have been. They say, “We are the ones being cast aside and expelled.” Yet, when you go to the Benishangul region, specifically Metekel, you find that around ninety thousand members of the Gumuz ethnic group have fled into the jungle. Only recently were they able to return to their homes. Still, no media outlet speaks for them or tells their story.

This country does not belong only to the Oromo and Amhara, comrades. It is not a place where only the Oromo and Amhara can shout, dance, and act as they please; there are many other ethnic groups who call Ethiopia home. The Oromo and Amhara may be large in number, but please, it would be better if you could calmly focus on what truly builds Ethiopia. If what belongs to us is always considered precious while what belongs to others is seen and dismissed as cheap, that won’t work. If we truly love Ethiopia, then it must be a nation where every citizen enjoys equal opportunity,

where every citizen is respected, and where all citizens can move freely and return home safely.

If your life is deemed valuable while someone else's is treated as worthless and disposable, that isn't going to work. This will greatly harm us. Please, those who trade this way as merchants of politics must reflect upon this. For instance, the media personalities and activists who amplify and inflame hostility whenever the Oromo and Amhara shed each other's blood, if Oromo and Amhara end each other's lives, there will be no Ethiopia. What are you going to govern?

While encouraging and inciting people to kill and slaughter one another, it's okay if this government falls; let it fall. But what will become of the people who are killing each other? What are they going to do with the population that is slaughtering itself? Even unfinished projects are already giving us headaches, let alone a population at war with itself. You cannot claim to lead a country while destroying it. This is a malady that manifests across every region of Ethiopia. Please, let us break out of this cycle. We already have more than enough problems; we should not add more.

Oromo will not benefit, Amhara will not benefit, Gurage will not benefit from mutual slaughter. None of us will benefit. We will bury our dead, we will weep, we will break people's families and see them torn apart, and yet life will continue. It is far better if we get out of this kind of matter. This is a mind-numbing and morality-shattering thing that is not suitable to work and live a normal life. Please, let us therefore reflect calmly and refuse to become instruments of destruction and a source of pleasure for our enemies.

It surprises me to see politicians, leaders, and people falling into traps so clearly laid before them—fully aware that there are forces

tirelessly investing their money, time, and efforts to see the Oromo and Amhara butcher each other. It would be better if you want to fight, let it at least be on your own time and terms rather than play into the hands of forces who believe their goals and ambitions in Ethiopia can only be achieved by turning Ethiopians against one another. We must learn to recognize and understand this clearly.

When an Oromo dies, when an Amhara dies, when a Gurage dies, it is not the loss of one ethnic group, but the loss of Ethiopia itself.Thinking that way, if we fail to feel the same sorrow and grieve equally for all of our citizens who suffer from violence, injustice, rape, and robbery, then we cannot build a common country. This applies to our political leaders as well. Please, let us think calmly and remember that Ethiopia is a country of more than eighty nations and nationalities, and it can only prosper if all its people live equally.

This speech was taken from the March 23, 2021 parliament session. Source: Fana Television.

Concerning the law enforcement campaign, some claim that war is waged to bring peace; they say war is fought to bring peace itself. Others say war is fought to bring justice and to safeguard the sovereignty of the nation. They give war different names, claiming that its ultimate purpose was to bring peace and justice. Yet, by any standard and measure, when war is conceived, waged, and concluded, it yields nothing but devastation and loss.

War is good for only one thing. The only good that can be said of war lies in not beginning it altogether. Once you start, there is only humiliation, death, and plunder. The very spirit of war itself feeds on fear, hatred, and pushing each other away.

This is why, if you recall, I have repeatedly said that the people of Tigray do not need to hear the sound of bullets to mark the New Year. They have already endured far too many. I have publicly and repeatedly pleaded with them in this Parliament, and I have also attempted to address the matter secretly by sending mediators several times. Bullets bring only loss and devastation. When gunfire erupts, it becomes impossible to prevent looting, rape, and plunder, all while propaganda spreads as usual. The primary solution lies in avoiding battle altogether.

Once a battle begins, everyone's focus shifts to expanding their territory, advancing, and striking the enemy, and the basic rights of the people are violated in the process. For 27 years, this force has robbed, killed, and destroyed our country. On their behalf, I asked the Ethiopian people in this Parliament to grant forgiveness. The compassionate people of Ethiopia forgave them, chose to forget, and set aside the past for the sake of the future. Yet when blood stains your hands, when wrongdoing remains in your possession, it will never let you rest. We have already acknowledged the wrongs of the past, asked our people for forgiveness, and agreed to move

forward, focusing on development while leaving the past behind. The problem does not lie with the people, nor with you; it lies solely with the abuser himself.

I repeatedly spoke with the TPLF's key leaders, executives, elders, and the central committee, and I begged them—please. When that failed, I discreetly summoned thirty to forty top wealthy and prominent people in Addis Ababa and dispatched them to the Tigray region as mediators. I told them to plead with these people that this would lead to destruction; Ethiopia was not, and could not be, defeated. It is not only that Ethiopia could not be defeated; I also sent a mediation team before the conflict broke out, warning that, if they entered into battle, they would be defeated; we would not be fighting a militia skirmish. Everyone who went to mediate came back with pity in their eyes, feeling sorry for me. The force in Tigray believed itself untouchable and indomitable, thinking it could do as it pleased with impunity while thinking us powerless and that we could do nothing. Those who came back from mediation urged me to be careful and to reconsider, but no one imagined that destruction could come from that side.

Even the ambassador of one country, whose name I will not disclose, went to Mekelle and spoke with Debretsion before the conflict broke out, pleading, "Please de-escalate this; avoid conflict." Debretsion replies, "Do not trouble yourself; do not worry, it will not take us more than two or three weeks; we will negotiate after we have defeated them." Arrogance is a dangerous thing. The saying "arrogance precedes downfall" is a correct saying. Yet this is not a rebuke aimed solely at the TPLF: we, the present generation of politicians, must also guard against arrogance, because it's a principle that works for anyone.

As you know, the TPLF's preparations are all about battle, all about marching, all about weapons, all about war, and combat. When we pleaded with them to stop, they turned a deaf ear to our pleas. They beat the war drum and boasted proudly; as if conflict were a virtue, they said war is our traditional game, our joke, our drama. But war can never be a drama for anyone, because it devours the human soul.

When someone who has a mother and father is involved in that matter and falls in battle, his death and wounds bring anguish, grief, and hardship to countless families. There is no benefit in such loss. That is why there were countless pleas to avert war.Yet you accused me of pleading too much and inaction, saying this government pleads too much and fails to act. Indeed, action is always possible, but we held back from taking action that takes lives and destroys property. We know all too well how much failure and suffering this conflict has already inflicted upon us.

The TPLF's desire for war is deeply saddening. For the past twenty years, while the TPLF was in power, 1.8 million people in Tigray have depended on safety-net support — twenty years. I am not speaking of Tigrayans living elsewhere in Ethiopia or abroad, but those residing within the Tigray region itself. 1.8 million people in Tigray have been relying on safety-net support for their survival. Even this meager support has often been reduced: if their quota is supposed to be three kilos, they receive only two; if five kilos, they are given four.

On top of this, the coronavirus pandemic, locust swarms, and failed harvests, crops that farmers had sown and labored for, weren't harvested. In such circumstances, no responsible person would choose to ignite a war. Even amid great wickedness, at the very least, choosing the right time was necessary.

The entire leadership of the Tigray region is war-mongers, conflict instigators, and war analysts. The war is not limited to one region; its reach is far wider. They proclaim that, “If anyone wants to fight us, let them come ten times; if someone dares to challenge us, let them come five times.” More than that, they claim that if they are attacked, the “Horn of Africa will plunge into chaos.” They themselves believed this, and they have even persuaded white people to see it this way. White people think so too, by the way.

But East Africa will descend into chaos only after the people of Tigray, the people of Amhara, and the people of Oromo have been harmed. There is no chance others will descend into chaos without you having been hurt. Is this all? Is this the full measure of their arrogance? In Ethiopia, we have heard and read from history that a person who kills a lion may boast of bravery. Today, however, a new kind of killer has emerged in Ethiopia, a slayer of farmers who kills those who till the land and boasts of their deeds as if they had slain a lion.

When we were fighting Shane in West Wollega for three to four months, there was no network. What is most saddening is that not a single foreign media outlet complained about this prolonged network outage in Wollega. So, is it considered a problem only when the Tigray region loses network access? Is a network shutdown in Wollega any less serious? Does it not matter if the people of Wollega suffer or die? Does the loss of communication not matter?

OLF-Shane is an enemy of Ethiopia. Their actions harm not only the Oromo, but also the Amhara, the Gurage, and humanity as a whole. Because we asked them to participate peacefully in the elections, to compete, and win fairly. Instead, they chose to become puppets of

this junta (TPLF), which kills farmers and boasts about it. This choice brings disaster to everyone.

Their violence serves no one, not even themselves. The people of Wollega have paid the price: roads remain unbuilt, development has stalled, and no one, neither inside nor outside the country, has spoken up for them. These forces are enemies of all of us. If we treat the actions of these forces as matters solely concerning the Oromo, the Amhara, or the Tigray, we are only serving the interests of our enemies. But if we stand together, declaring them enemies of the Amhara and the Oromo, of the Gurage and the Wolayta, we can eliminate them. We must not give them any room to operate.

It is not feasible; it is better to approach this matter with a calm spirit. It is not doable to shed human blood as we please. Whether they are Oromo or Amhara, let no more of our people die, for we have no surplus of human life to lose. It is unjust to let people die for the sake of our political fights and rivalry, especially when they are already suffering from hunger as if that weren't enough.

Many knowingly want to deny the wrongdoing and injustice that have been committed against us. On that single day in Tigray, the junta (TPLF) carried out coordinated attacks on the Northern Command, not in one or two places, but in about two hundred sites simultaneously. Now, is this something that happened suddenly or by accident? No, it was a meticulously planned and well-organized act. In that incident, more than seven thousand officials, men of rank and responsibility, many of whom were sleeping beside their families and stationed in cities across the region, were seized, including a general from across the region.

Even after we captured Mekele, more than 1,300 officers remained in the custody of the TPLF. They had been seized by the junta and forced to walk barefoot for over 100 kilometers. Yet, the matter did

not end there; the attacks did not cease with the Northern Command. Who initiated the assault on the Amhara region, turning the conflict into a nationwide crisis? The answer is clear to any Ethiopian: it was this very force that launched the attacks on the Amhara region, deliberately seeking to draw the Amhara region into the war. The conflict soon exceeded Ethiopia's borders; who fired rockets into Eritrea, expanding the war into a regional confrontation?

There is now a lot of talk about infrastructure, yet what rationale or science could possibly justify the rocket attacks on the Gondar and Bahir Dar airports? We did not attack the Aksum and Mekelle airports while we were fighting in Tigray. We exercised caution and deliberately avoided the use of heavy weapons. The Ethiopian Defense Force only fired rockets after we had taken control of Mekelle and they had fled to the Tekeze Desert. Even though we possessed more than sufficient rockets, we did not use them.

Moreover, over 10,000 prisoners were held in Mekelle alone, and in total, more than 30,000 detainees were released across the Tigray region. Until then, we had not even known that such large numbers of people were being imprisoned like this. Our people suffered amidst the crossfire, caught between multiple forces.

Although the origin of all this devastation lies with an irresponsible force, it is the ordinary people who are bearing the consequences. This people do not deserve the weight of additional debt, especially while more than 1.8 million already rely on a safety net for survival. The people of Tigray are undeserving of conflict and war. However, the junta force they carry has brought further suffering and debt, drenched in the blood and sins already staining their hands. The consequences these actions have caused are countless.

Our law enforcement campaign has three distinct objectives and is guided by a clear purpose. The first one targets criminals who have committed heinous acts, those who have killed and massacred, left bodies strewn indiscriminately, and imprisoned thousands of Ethiopian Defense Forces personnel for reasons they do not know, solely because of their ethnicity, the very army that has been defending its people for an entire twenty years, we called on these criminals to surrender to the government and submit themselves to the law, for the crimes they committed against the Ethiopian Defense Forces constitute serious offenses under Ethiopian law.

We urged them to submit to the law and allow the law to judge them. We said, “Let the law take its course.” Just because we have captured you and you are in our custody does not mean we intend to kill you. Our first objective is to bring criminals before the law and let justice, not retribution, prevail.

The second objective is to secure the release of hostages. These are soldiers who believed in Ethiopia and devoted themselves to serving in honor of their country. They were separated from their homes and families, have been in strongholds for twenty years, and were unexpectedly attacked from behind by their own countrymen. and thousands of officers were kidnapped and taken captive. Which nation would not make an effort to free its own citizens? Whenever any country's officer is taken hostage, multiple operations are undertaken to ensure their release. In our case, more than a thousand officers have been seized, including a general. The second objective of our campaign is to free them.

The third objective is that, since this region is home to our people, they need an interim administration to provide basic services, establish a government, and eventually hold elections so that they can choose the leaders they want. As you know, we have captured

many criminals under the first objective, but there are still remaining criminals. There is a force trying to link and conflate the apprehension of the remaining criminals with the overall objective of our operation, which is wrong.

While the U.S. Army was dismantling Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, it took years to capture Osama bin Laden. Destroying Al-Qaeda's military capability and capturing bin Laden are two separate things. Similarly, we have dismantled what this force was doing as an institution. Individuals wanted by the law will be brought to justice when they are found.

In Iraq, modern armies and technologically advanced countries engaged in combat in which more than 60% of the casualties were civilians. In Afghanistan, 25% of the casualties were civilians. You are also hearing about the ongoing conflicts in Yemen and Syria. In such situations, civilians suffer heavily. The best solution is not to start a war. Once a war begins, whether you are modern or wealthy, or poor and under-equipped, collateral damage becomes inevitable.

Once you start a battle, you can't turn around and say, "Hey, no slapping in the face!" or "That's not fair!" Those are boxing match rules, they call that a foul. Such rules belong to boxing matches, not battlefields. War is an inherently ugly and horrifying thing once you are involved in it.

Regarding human rights abuses, as I mentioned earlier, war is inherently destructive and harms many people; there is no question about this. Crimes have also been committed in the Tigray region. Setting aside the exaggerated propaganda and lies that are being told and spread, there is evidence indicating that crimes such as the rape of women and the looting of property have occurred. We assessed this issue together with the National Defense Force for a week. Any member of the National Defense Force who committed

crimes of rape against our Tigrayan sisters or looted property will be held accountable under the law. Our soldiers were deployed to Tigray to fight the junta (TPLF), not to torment or agonize our people. It is a dangerous thing if we allow our hatred for the junta to cloud our judgment and fail to distinguish the people from their leaders. We must be guided by operational ethics in order to move forward responsibly.

The destruction that follows a victory by the force that went on a campaign is a dangerous wound, one that, if left unchecked, can scar a nation for centuries. Unless soldiers uphold high ethical standards even after triumph, it can leave scars that can endure for centuries. For this reason, we are determined to take strong action within our army. We honor the heroes, reward the deserving, and prosecute those found guilty of misconduct.

While there has been considerable exaggeration and the usual propaganda surrounding the wrongdoings that took place, if there is even a single verified act of misconduct it demands taking corrective action. Alongside our own efforts, the Human Rights Commission has been conducting a thorough investigation and study, and I hope it will release its report soon.

There may be differences in numbers and accounts between what the Human Rights Commission reports and what we present, as well as between the Commission's findings and the claims made by the junta's cadres. However, even a single act of abuse should never be committed, and it must be examined carefully. Despite this, some people continue to distort the truth; they cannot see the truth correctly as it is. A person who looks at one thing with his left eye cannot see another thing with his right eye. Those who loudly shout and denounce human rights violations and raise their voices about

the problems in the Tigray region say nothing about the attacks on the Northern Command.

The Northern Command was not only attacked; it was humiliated. No one raised their voice when its members were massacred and crushed under vehicles in cities across the region. I do not understand how one can claim to see humanity with one eye open while the other remains willfully blind.

The massacre at Maikadra, when an organized force turned its weapons against innocent people and slaughtered citizens of their own country, people who lived by their daily labor, is a tragedy that the entire nation witnessed and the world looked on. Yet no one seems to care. Are the people of Maikadra not human? Is it not a problem when their suffering is ignored? Is their pain unworthy of remembrance? Is wrongdoing and abuse only recognized when it happens now?

The massacre at Maikadra remains one of the worst atrocities committed in Ethiopia in recent times; no massacre of such magnitude has been carried out elsewhere in Ethiopia during the current operation. But Maikadra has been forgotten; Their suffering and pain left unspoken.

The Gondar and Bahir Dar airports, which the junta demolished with rockets, are still asking us for billions in repairs, yet no one seems to care either. People lost their lives in Bahir Dar; in Gondar, an entire farmer's family was killed by a rocket strike. Yet no one raises their voice for them.

When it comes to aid, many people post on Facebook, Twitter, and various media platforms, saying they have concerns. But the people of Tigray cannot eat Twitter concerns — they eat wheat, not words. Those who truly care about the people of Tigray should provide

real assistance, not just sympathy on social media. What's needed is practical help, not performative Twitter concern.

The efforts made by other Ethiopian regions to support the people of Tigray are highly praiseworthy and commendable. Every region has contributed in one way or another. Still we must continue to assist our people, support the administration, and help the displaced return to their homes. This is our collective responsibility, not a matter we can overlook simply because the forces of destruction initiated the crisis.

We must act, and everyone has a role to play. The people must cooperate, and the wealthy must do their part. It is far better for the rich to provide wheat to feed the hungry than to spend their resources hiring lobbyists. Likewise, the diaspora should extend help in ways that directly benefit the people, rather than funding activities that bring further destruction, because such an approach does not solve the people's problems.

Another issue that comes up is the claim that the Eritrean army has entered Tigray. It is important to say a few things about this as well. First, both friends and enemies should know that when the Ethiopian people, the government, and the National Defense Force were betrayed and subjected to brutal devastation and atrocities at the hands of their own compatriots, the way in which the Eritrean people and government received the soldiers who fled to them, and supported them to go where they wanted is always a favor to Ethiopia. This is not a matter that can be forgotten or dismissed by the fairy tales of self-proclaimed activists.

One thing I want the honorable Parliament to understand is that in times of adversity, no one truly stands by your side. Even your own shadow betrays you in the darkness, let alone another person. It is only in the light that you see your shadow is following you; in darkness, it flees. Your own shadow walks beside you in the light, yet it deserts you the moment darkness arrives and cannot be seen. The history of Ethiopia will never forget the hospitality extended to our soldiers who fled to Eritrea from death in times of trouble. Those who would have us deny, forget, or insult this generosity are fools. We will not do so. We remain sincerely grateful to the Eritrean people and government for what they have done.

However, going forward, we will not accept any actions by the Eritrean army that involve crossing the border, moving within Ethiopia, and committing any acts that could be construed and perceived as injustices against our people. We will not accept this not because it is the Eritrean army; we will not accept it even if it were our own soldiers. The campaign is directed solely against our clearly identified enemies, not against our people. On this matter, we have engaged in multiple discussions with the Eritrean government, sending high-ranking officials from both sides on four to five occasions to address and clarify the issue.

Regarding false information and propaganda, my countryman says, “The second injustice done to me: I was beaten on my shoulder, and then stripped of my clothes.” That is the second injustice.

After all the wrongdoings we have suffered, after operations that subvert our country’s economy and humiliate our nation have been carried out against us, after losing what is rightfully ours, after being robbed, killed, and betrayed, efforts are being made to portray us as criminals in return. This is the saddest thing. In my belief, the TPLF’s approach is that most Ethiopians in every

international institution, including Amnesty, the UN, and other agencies, are part of the TPLF cadre family. TPLF has placed them in these institutions over the past thirty years.

It is the family of this agent cadre that is misleading the U.S. government with information. They have friends they have worked with for twenty to thirty years. They have friends because they have money. Six months ago, they hired a lobby. Why? Because they have stolen wealth taken from us. Ethiopia does not have such wealth; our country has been robbed and is still trying to recover it. Because they have so much money, they have hired lobbyists in every country, bought media outlets, and members of parliament; they have voices shouting for them. But if you go to the Benishangul-Gumuz Metekel zone, not only can people there not hire a lobbyist, they do not even know where to hire one. Because of this, no one shouts for them. The Amhara and Agaw farmers have been displaced from Metekel and scattered across villages have no one to speak for them. Because it is not spoken or shouted for the voiceless, but for those who have money.

I think of the TPLF as a child of a mortar for Ethiopia. A child of mortar (the pestle) cannot do its job (task) unless it pounds, stomps, and presses against its mother (the mortar). I am deeply saddened by the fact that the TPLF assumes it can achieve its goals by humiliating Ethiopia, plundering its resources, sowing division, and impoverishing its people, acting just like a child of a mortar (the pestle) that beats its own mother (mortar). That is exactly what is happening now. As conflicts end in one region, the financial resources used to fuel violence are simply redirected to provoke people to kill one another elsewhere.

The person who sits idly yet proclaims, “People of Ethiopia, arise! Stand up! Wake up! The Oromo people are being killed, the Amhara people are being killed!”—but he himself does not rise, serves only to fulfill the dream of the Junta by inciting people to kill one another. If anyone tells you, “People of Ethiopia, rise and kill each other,” reject it decisively; Say “This is not the culture of Ethiopianism.” But if someone says, “Reconcile, make peace, come to an agreement, stay calm, take it easy,” reminding us that our fellow citizens are our brothers then, that person is a true friend.

When it comes to foreigners who compare Ethiopia to Syria, Libya, or Yemen, I want to say this to them: do not let the papaya tree and the palm tree confuse you. They may look alike, but they are not the same. There is nothing that connects Ethiopia to Syria or Yemen in that way. Ethiopia has its own image, its own heritage, and its own identity. The path to overcoming our challenges is rooted in that uniqueness.

We are a people of moral excellence. It is because of our commitment to truth, morality, and justice that we succeeded in this operation, and we will succeed again in the future. Ethiopia is a nation that has been able to defeat invaders by mobilizing farmers through the Call-up Proclamation, even without a salaried army or formal military divisions. Farmers with no payroll and no official recognition or name have defeated invaders with nothing more than a call to defend their country. Today's formal military has tanks and artillery, but even without them, Ethiopia has preserved its honor through the Call-up Proclamation, and it will continue to do so in the future. It is a mistake to judge Ethiopia by comparing it to other countries without properly understanding it.

I have encountered three types of foreign people. Among them are those whose friendship has surpassed my expectations, countries that have understood Ethiopia's history, honor, and the future aspirations of its people. These countries have tried, worked, supported, and sought to stand with friendly nations in friendship and truth. We have witnessed countries whose names will be remembered well in the annals of Ethiopian history, and with whom we will stand through any challenge they face in the future. This period of darkness has allowed us to identify and truly know our friends.

In another way, we have also seen forces that have tried to exploit the situation to twist our hands and bend our will. I do not seek conflict with any country, nor do I want to quarrel with any nation. I only wish to work in a way that ensures Ethiopia's prosperity through peace. Let it be known to all forces: if you come and act in ways that harm Ethiopia's honor and interests, I would rather lay down my life, but that will not happen. It will not happen. That said, we do not want confrontation; nothing can be achieved by twisting or coercion. A puppet government will not be created in Ethiopia. We each have legitimate interests, and those interests can be reconciled so that we may live and cooperate together in honor. This is the second kind of force I have observed.

The third force is composed of deliberate and organized actors who devote their time and resources to our destruction. There are three kinds of actors: enemies who seek to annihilate us, opportunists who aim to bend us, and genuine friends. Yet these actors forget that Ethiopia is a nation seasoned by trial and has endured undue pressure, assaults, discrimination, and betrayal over centuries. This is not new to us. Ethiopia has repeatedly demonstrated that it is a country that does not collapse when others declare that she has fallen, been scattered, or reached her end.

Today, I do not have the slightest—not even 0.1% of a doubt—that Ethiopia will not be scattered. Such fears have been torn down, and she has overcome them even amid suffering. Above all, it is a country where both Muslims and Christians look up to the heavens, fear God, and maintain a bond with the Creator. It is a people who believe in divine mercy and have their own covenant with the Creator. God will not abandon this nation, and no matter how much others may scheme, they must come to understand this truth.

We are poor, and we need peace, cooperation, and support to overcome poverty quickly. But we do not have to sell our dignity to get out of poverty quickly. We will continue to move forward with our dignity intact. Above all, Ethiopia is a country committed to peaceful self-transformation through cooperation with all peoples and adherence to international law. Beyond that, it would be crucial to understand that any efforts to shock, intimidate, or unsettle us in a hostile spirit will not work.

Here is the link to the full speech on YouTube:

https://youtu.be/b-2cN-3KK0A?si=g6BiwcZnkXTA7OQH

therealjobiruk@gmail.com